



ASK DEANNA! Real People, Real Advice

Ask Deanna! Is an advice column known for its fearless approach to reality-based subjects!

Dear Deanna!

My spouse is trying to force me to quit my stable job of 10 years. I've never had problems and the benefits are great. The issue is a new department secretary. I have no interest in this woman, but my wife only sees her as a young, energetic woman climbing the ladder. I've done nothing to make my wife insecure and she's going crazy listening to office gossip. I'm not quitting my job and my wife still insists that I should. What do I do?

Paul R.
Jacksonville, FL

Dear Paul:

If you've had the same job and same spouse with no issues, then something has been triggered with the arrival your new employee. If you've winked or wagged, then you've given the office hens something to talk about. Office gossip is 99 percent gossip with a 1 percent smell of truth. Your wife has an insecurity issue that started before now and this is simply an excuse. You have a choice to fix your marriage, fix your job or fix yourself.

Dear Deanna!

My son is an active teen and I find myself at my wits end worrying about him fathering children, exposure to sickness and everything else. We argue because I want to know if he's protecting himself and he laughs and says it's not his responsibility. How do I get my son to see that he has to protect himself and not rely on these women he's being with?

Katie
Indianapolis, IN

Dear Katie:

You're doing the right thing by teaching your son to not rely on women for his intimate safety and protection. He needs to wake up and get wise before he blinks and has a house of babies and less than a year to love them. You can talk to your son until you're blue in the face but if it takes something to jump on him that he can't shake, then so be it and keep it moving.

Dear Deanna:

I'm a teacher in the school system and I have a parent that threatened me because I gave her child a bag of clothes. It's obvious the child is being neglected and I didn't mean any harm. I'm tired of dealing with this parent and want to move the child from my class, but I'm afraid that things will be worse. Am I personally getting too involved with this situation?

Ms. S.
Trenton, NJ

Dear Ms. S.:

You're not getting too involved because you're possibly saving a child's life. You should continue to do what you feel is right especially if it's helping this child. However, you need to avoid overstepping your boundaries. Utilize the appropriate authorities in your school network to ensure the child's safety, continued education as well as resources and tools to help the mother get her act together.

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Johnson recounts career path

By Tiffany Jackson
Special to Sentinel-Voice

DALLAS (NNPA) - Sheila Crump Johnson wears many hats. Quiet and unassuming, she's the consummate professional, a heavy-weight in business and industry. And, she's a billionaire.

Her impressive bio includes becoming the first African-American female billionaire, the co-founder of BET, CEO of Salamander Hospitality and partner in Lincoln Holdings.

And if that weren't enough, the University of Illinois alum has her stake in the athletic world, as the co-owner of three athletic teams: the Washington Capitals, the Mystics and the Wizards.

Johnson is also a violinist, photographer, philanthropist, community activist and most importantly, a loving mother and wife.

When asked how she balances all of these roles, she says, "I don't believe in balance, I believe in priorities."

Johnson visited Dallas recently to speak at the Dallas Morning News Distinguished Women Leaders Lecture Series. For 10 years, the series has showcased women leaders and highlighted their achievements, as well as their challenges.

Although Johnson has accomplished a lot, in her speech she expressed how she has also faced many adversities, including sexism and racism.

"I was an entrepreneur at an early age," said Johnson,



Sheila Johnson addressed a forum of women leaders.

who described how she discovered the violin, an instrument she played throughout high school. "I received a scholarship and later I put together a string orchestra in Washington."

She then formed a music conservatory that lasted until 1989.

The money that she received from giving violin lessons was used to help her and her then-husband, Robert Johnson, start Black Entertainment Television (BET), which launched in 1979.

"The network was created out of anger and frustration," said Johnson. "We were tired of how Blacks were portrayed on other television networks."

"I started Teen Summit, which was the first televised show for teens, and BET Nightly News. But after my husband and I divorced, I was erased from the business."

But she wasn't erased from life, as she quickly focused her efforts in other areas. Recalling the transformation, she jubilantly shouted, "Now I'm a new woman," to thunderous applause.

Then she went on to tell about how she started a farm-land out of 167 acres of land in Middleburg, Virginia. She calls the land her "prayer sanctuary," a place she likes to walk around and scream to let off some steam.

She shares the farm with her two teenage children, her new husband and 25 horses.

Shortly after Johnson bought her farmland, she learned that 400 acres of land was available for purchase not far from where she lives.

"I bought the \$7 million land and I said that I was going to make a 40-room inn," she said. "I was not able to do this very easily. I attended town hall meetings because

many of the people in Virginia did not want me to buy the land.

"I was placed on the FBI victims lists, I was called a 'Black bitch,' hate mail was sent and my daughter was attacked at a nail salon. My life was totally threatened."

It appeared, she said, that in that area there were no destination places or resorts and many wanted to keep it that way.

"The town hall meetings became more and more painful," she recalled. "I was verbally abused by one NFL commentator but I stayed a woman of grace."

Johnson said that a group of people came and talked about racism in Virginia but in the end she won by an eight-to-one vote.

"Before I left the meeting, a judge spoke up and said, 'If that woman was a White male she would have never had to go through this and that resort would have been up.'"

She eventually bought the building and her resort, Salamander, is now a tourist attraction with entertainment and restaurants. She said she kept the name, Salamander, because salamanders are the "only animals that can walk through fire and still come out alive."

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the number of Black-owned businesses grew by 45 percent from 1997 to 2002. The Business Council reports that more (See Johnson, Page 8)

School cell phone ban protests

By Tanangachia Mfuni
Special to Sentinel-Voice

NEW YORK (NNPA) - As high school students took to the streets of Brooklyn recently protesting a city-wide rule banning cell phones in public schools, they got support from an unlikely source.

The city's teachers' union passed a resolution stating that each school should be allowed to create and enforce their individual cell phone policy, rather than be subject to the Department of Education's blanket policy.

"Whereas, this Administration pays lip service to empowering administration and staff to maintain orderly schools, but does not trust them to deal with incidents of cell phone abuse; be it resolved, that in lieu of banning the possession of student cell phones outright, each school develop and enforce a policy

prohibiting cell phone use by students in the school building," reads the resolution issued May 1 and adopted unanimously by the approximately 90 executive board members of the United Federation of Teachers.

Krystle Guejuste, the junior walkout leader, was arrested with four students in the April 12 walkout she helped organize, received the union's show of support warily.

"I believe that there's a negative and positive to that," said Guejuste, who led students from her secondary school to the Department of Education's regional superintendent offices on Livingston Street.

"Putting the power into the schools' hands is a good thing, but it's also a negative thing because the schools won't be getting the same

treatment all around the board," said Guejuste, joined by dozens of protesters from her Trust Us student coalition as well as members of 100 Blacks in Law Enforcement, who have stood in support of the students.

Mayor Michael Bloomberg said in a press conference hours before the demonstration, "I don't think that any responsible person can make the case that iPods and Blackberrys and cell phones and other electronic devices should be in the classroom when our teachers are working as hard as they possibly can to teach our children what they're supposed to know."

While Randi Weingarten, president of the teachers union, agrees cell phones are a distraction and should be banned from school build-

ings, she also argues they are a vital means of communication between students and their guardians.

"Cell phones are a lifeline for many parents and students. We agree with the prohibition of cell phone use in buildings, but we need to have a balance."

The Department of Education has shown little leniency on the matter.

"We're sympathetic to the concerns of parents," said DOE spokesperson Alicia Maxey. "But our experience is that if cell phones are allowed into schools, they will be used. And when they are, whether for talking or messaging or taking photos, they inevitably interrupt the school's learning environment."

Tanangachia Mfuni writes for the Amsterdam News.